THE SETTLEMENT OF HINGHAM

MASSACHUSETTS

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LOUIS C. CORNISH

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Copies of this pamphlet can be obtained by addressing the Hingham Memorial Committee, Hingham, Massachusetts. Price 35 cents.

"The Settlement of Hingham" will also be printed in "Hingham," a book to be published in July, 1911, by the Old Colony Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Copies can be obtained by addressing the Regent of the Chapter, Hingham, Massachusetts. Price $1.00.

A VIEW OF OLD HINGHAM, NORFOLK, ENGLAND, TAKEN FROM THE TOWER OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.

THE SETTLEMENT OF HINGHAM.

By Louis C. Cornish.

A FEW families are known to have come to the shores of Bare Cove in 1633, and are believed to have been the first settlers. Others came in 1634. The deed to the whole adjacent territory given by the Indians thirty years later fixes this as the year of the foundation. "Certain Englishmen," it tell us, "did come to inhabit in the days of Chickatabut, our father chief sachem, and by free consent of our father did set down upon his land in the year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred and thirty-four." In 1635 some forty-eight settlers came, and perhaps as many more in the next three years. Their names are given us upon a list, made by Mr. Cushing, the third town clerk, "of such persons as came out of the town of Hingham, and the towns adjacent, in the county of Norfolk, in the kingdom of England into New England and settled in Hingham." "The whole number who came out of Norfolk, chiefly from Hingham and its vicinity, from 1633 to 1639, and settled in Hingham," he tells us further, "was two hundred and six."

Probably somewhat enlarged by additions from other sources, this little company of perhaps two hundred and fifty souls apportioned land in 1635, settled a minister, "gathered a parish," built a meeting-house, erected their settlement into a Plantation, thus gaining representation in the General Court, and named their new home Hingham in love for the old home across the sea.

Practical considerations no doubt determined the selection of the site. The bay gave good fishing, and the flats yielded plenty of shellfish. Then as now the low rolling hills stretched pleasantly inland from the harbor's edge. There were sightly and well sheltered building spots. The broad open spaces offered easy tillage and pasture. There was an abundant supply both of wood and of water. The site could be readily defended, and provided a convenient waterway to Boston, already a considerable town and well fortified. Not least of the advantages was a safe and sufficient anchorage in the landlocked harbor with the open sea just beyond it. Possibly another consideration may have had weight. The distance from Boston insured to the Plantation a considerable independence in the management of its own affairs. Such may well have been the reasons which led to the selection of the shallow bay at the lower end of what is now Boston Harbor for the site of the Plantation of New Hingham.

With this said, there remains the more interesting question what brought these people across the sea? Why did they leave well established homes in the old country to endure the dangers and discomforts of life on the edge of an untrodden wilderness? What tempted them to brave the little traveled and perilous North Atlantic? In short, what were the reasons for the migration? Although it cannot be briefly stated, the answer is plain. To understand it one must journey at least in fancy to far distant places and times, and see the erection of this plantation in the long perspective of history.

Our journey will take us over the sea to England, and from London northward and eastward through the wide level lands of Essex, and Suffolk, and Norfolk. The New Englander will find

many names made familiar by long association, witnesses to the influence of this region upon early New England. Here are Wrentham and Ipswich; there Stoneham, and Yarmouth, Boxford, Sudbury, and Lynn. Here, too, is the little town of Worstead, famed seven centuries ago for its woolen stuffs, a name that long since became a household word. The entire region has a character peculiar to itself. From the Thames on the south to the Wash on the north, these counties form a sort of promontory, which looks across the troubled Northern Sea to Holland and Belgium, countries which they much resemble. The wide marshlands are deserted and again flooded each day by the tide, and the far-famed Norfolk Broads call to mind the flat surfaces of the neighboring lowlands.

Not in appearance only is this promontory like the low countries. From them it drew some of its blood, and much of its spirit. This easternmost part of England has been called the hotbed of independency. It was one of the strongholds, if not the very stronghold, of that independent spirit which in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries established constitutional government in England, and planted it on the edge of the American wilderness.

Curious testimonies regarding the persistency of Norfolkshire independency are on record. In passing, two may be selected from many others. The Evangelist Wesley, writing a century after our period, said of Norwich, "Whatever be the color of their religious convictions, they do all dearly love a conflict." And a modern writer, tracing this independency through the later infusions of Flemish and Huguenot blood to the early Scandinavian settlement, ends sadly, "This spirit has persisted through all changes to the present time, causing Norfolk to be

the greatest hotbed of nonconformity to be found to-day within the three seas."

It will be well briefly to trace back this Norfolkshire independence that we may see how deep buried its roots are in the past. In the very early days there are traces of Scandinavian settlement in this region. Later William the Conqueror brought over weavers from Flanders, who settled in Norwich and laid the foundation of the city's prosperity. Later by three centuries Edward the Third invited over Flemish artisans who settled in Norwich and its vicinity. Their number was large, and they intermarried with the people. Later still, wherever these foreigners had settled there developed a stronghold of the Reformation, and later yet a center of this independency. Perhaps more potent than the infusion of foreign blood was the persistent influence and example of the foreigners. Through these centuries there was constant intercourse with the low countries, the nursery of European independency, and the foreigners in Norfolk and vicinity enjoyed substantial privileges that were denied to the people. So founded and fostered, this independency was shown in countless ways. To cite only one illustration, about 1360 Wycliffe spread a knowledge of the Bible. In the persecution which twenty years later overtook his followers more persons died at the stake in Norfolk than in all the other counties of England put together. Among the first was William Carman from Hingham. In short this eastern promontory of England was a region possessed from the earliest days of peculiar inheritances and influences. Norfolk was an important part of this region, Norwich was the center of it, and some sixteen miles out of Norwich lay the little town of Hingham.

The facts known to us about the Old Hingham of three cen-

turies ago are like bits of a broken mosaic. Judged by themselves, though not without antiquarian interest, they have no great meaning. Placed in their pattern, however, they take on a large significance and are seen to be part of a great design.

The mosaic into which the facts about Old Hingham should be fitted is no less than the history of England from 1600 to 1650, momentous years which witnessed the rise of modern democracy. The struggle for freedom it is true can be traced far back of this period. Judged broadly it is as old as time. But in this half century certain distinct democratic aspirations after freedom slowly took definite form and were securely established for all English speaking people. For our purposes modern democracy began in the last part of Elizabeth's reign, came more plainly into view in the reigns of James and Charles the First, and was permanently established in the Commonwealth under Cromwell. Emerging about 1600, modern democracy took definite form and grew in strength until it established constitutional government fifty years later. Such is the pattern of history into which the story of Hingham must be fitted to be understood. It was part of a great movement, the result of a vital struggle in human development.

Mighty human issues hung upon this contest. Absolute monarchies were rising on the continent. It was boldly said in James' Parliament, and probably with truth, that England was the only country in Europe where the people were fighting for their rights. The issue was clear-cut. On the one side were the common people, sometimes ignorant and mistaken, but doggedly persistent. The parish clergy often were with them, and a few of the bishops. On the other side was the Court, comprising the King, the nobles, and the higher clergy. The latter,

themselves mostly of gentle birth and created by the Crown, naturally were devoted to its interests. The two parties were fundamentally at variance. The Court neither understood nor sympathized with the rising democracy. Its conception of the state was wholly aristocratic, government from above downward. The people, impatient of these practices, were groping toward the modern conception that government rests upon the consent of the governed. The people desired to increase the powers of their Parliament. The Crown desired to govern without the Parliament, or with a Parliament made entirely docile. The people were feeling their way toward constitutional government. The Court was dreaming of absolute monarchy.

This fundamental disagreement must be kept in mind if the contest and its importance are to be understood. Unfortunately the issue is obscured by theological and ecclesiastical quarrels, and by the romantic appeals of the cavaliers and round-heads. To look on this controversy, however, as concerned primarily with churchly or philosophical matters is to profoundly mistake its meaning. Modern democracy, and nothing less, was emerging for its age-long struggle against absolutism and privilege. It is in this broad aspect of the contest that we are all alike interested.

To understand it we must lay aside our preferences for churchly ceremonials and definitions of religion. On these matters we differ. But about the desirability of a truly representative government, concerning the people's right to govern themselves, upon the principle that we will pay no taxes except those which we ourselves shall levy, about our freedom to think and act as we please, and to worship God as we deem helpful, on these essential underlying principles of democracy we all agree.

In England there was a mighty difference of opinion about these matters between 1600 and 1650. Men fought for them to the death and to the death men fought against them. It was for these great privileges of freedom that together with others the men of this eastern promontory were contending.

While the contest was so broad in its scope that it is difficult to show it in any brief compass, there were two points around which it clearly centered. The Church sought to suppress all right of private judgment and independent action. The Crown sought to tax the people without their consent. Upon these difficulties the conflicting parties met and met again. It may be profitable for us to look at two fairly typical instances where these differences are shown, and where the part played by the eastern promontory is also revealed.

The first instance shows the temper of the Church in regard to the freedom of the individual. Persecution of independently minded people gradually increased through the century preceding our period. We find a number of persons burned in Norwich and its vicinity. For example, in 1556 William Carman of Hingham is burned in Norwich for being "an obstinate heritic," and for having in his possession "a Bible, a Testament, and three Psalters in the English tongue." In 1593 the Lords passed a bill making it punishable by death merely "*To hold an opinion* contrary to the ecclesiastical establishment of the realm." The bill did not become law. Reflecting perhaps upon the difficulty of judging unexpressed opinions, the Commons amended it. As passed the law provided that, "Any person . . . *writing or saying* anything against the Crown in ecclesiastical causes . . . shall be imprisoned without bail [It should be remembered what the English prisons were at the time],

. . . and at the end of three months shall be banished from the kingdom forfeiting all his goods and chattels, and the income of his real estate for life. Persons refusing to leave, or returning, shall suffer death as felons." This was for *writing or saying anything* against the Crown in ecclesiastical matters. Here surely was government from above downward! That the eastern promontory did not take willingly to this procedure is shown by the comment of Sir Walter Raleigh. He held that there were no less than 20,000 persons in this vicinity to whom the law applied.

The next incident shows the temper of the Crown in the matter of taxation. It will be remembered that on the death of Elizabeth in 1603 James the First came to the throne. He reigned until 1624, when he was succeeded by Charles the First. During these years continual quarrels arose between the King and people over the right of the Crown to levy taxes without the consent of Parliament. For example, King James reproves the Parliament for asking him how the taxes had been expended. The Parliament then records its conviction that this matter is a part of its duty and proper privilege. For answer the King goes to the House of Commons and with his own royal hand tears from the Book of Records the pages on which the resolution is written.

The same struggle is shown in a stronger light some years later. King Charles sends soldiers to arrest the refractory members of Parliament. A member sees them coming, locks the door in their faces, and holds the speaker in his chair while the Commons passes the famous resolution, declaring that thereafter any man paying taxes levied without the consent of Parliament

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, HINGHAM. NORFOLK, ENGLAND,
AS SEEN FROM THE RECTORY GROUNDS.

shall be considered an enemy to the liberties of England. This member was Sir Miles Hobart, representative from Norfolk.

Arrayed against this absolutism in Court and Church was the people's independence. Widespread throughout all England, perhaps this independent spirit found its largest single expression in southeastern England in the little promontory where our interests are centered.

Curious incidents show how strong was this temper in Norfolk. In Norwich the citizens occasionally rang the church bells during the sermon time at the cathedral, and even interrupted the sermon with questions. We find Robert Brown, later known as the Father of Congregationalism, much in Norwich, where at last he was imprisoned. As early as 1580, his followers had considered migrating from Norfolkshire either to Scotland or the Island of Gurnsey in order to enjoy freedom of speech. John Robinson, who later led the Pilgrims from Austerfield and Scrooby to Holland, and who later yet helped on if he did not initiate their removal to Plymouth, was a settled minister of St. Andrew's Parish in Norwich between 1602 and 1607, where he may have been known to Robert Peck. Cromwell's mother was a Norwich woman, and Cromwell was much in this vicinity. Norfolk was one of the seven shires later associated for his support, and from Norfolk came many of his ironsides.

Through these years the officials in Norfolk had hard work of it. Bishop Harsuet of Norwich, for example, is disliked by the people because he favors the Court, and by the Court for the contrary reason that he favors the people. In 1619 he is singularly accused of holding "both papistical and puritanical leanings." Evidently the poor bishop did what he could. In 1624 we find him thanking the bailiffs of Yarmouth, a short distance from

Hingham, for closing conventicles. In the same year complaints are lodged against him in Parliament for suppressing sermons and lectures, exacting undue fees, persecuting parishioners who refused to bow to the east, setting up images in the churches, and the like. He answers that these accusations proceed from the independents ("Puritans") whom he has vainly tried to suppress. As the conflict grew more bitter these difficulties increased.

Much more might be related to show the temper of independency and its expression in Norfolkshire. But this outline will serve as a background. With these facts in mind, let us look at one of the fragments of Hingham history that has survived these three centuries. We learn that in 1605 Robert Peck became minister of St. Andrew's Parish, Hingham, a conspicuous and influential position. The son of a country gentleman, who traced his ancestry back through twenty generations to an ancient Yorkshire family, he was born in Beccles, Suffolk, a short distance from Hingham, in the year 1580. Beccles had been made conspicuous by the burning of several heretics there a few years earlier. At the age of sixteen Peck entered Magdalene College, Cambridge University, then the academic center of the democratic movement, receiving his Bachelor's degree in 1599, and his Master's in 1603. It is to be noted that John Robinson was much in Cambridge until 1601, when he resigned his fellowship to take up his work in Norwich. The two men may well have been acquainted at the University. In his twenty-fifth year Peck was inducted into his first and only parish, which he served through many vicissitudes for fifty-three years until his death in 1658.

The contest which we have reviewed was at his doors. In the year of his settlement, 1605, five ministers were expelled from

their parishes in the diocese of Norwich, all neighbors of Robert Peck, and undoubtedly known to him. Soon after John Robinson left Norwich for Scrooby. In 1615 Peck was himself reported to Parliament for nonconformity and misdemeanors, in other words for his independency. We are told also that on one occasion the citizens of Norwich petitioned Parliament in his behalf.*

Before continuing with the Hingham history it is necessary to recall that in 1625 Charles the First succeeded his father. He early chose as an advisor William Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury. With him the struggle to make England conform was carried to its greatest lengths, and he early turned his attention to this eastern promontory.

Sir Nathaniel Brent had been sent down to hold a metropolitan visitation. We are told that "many ministers appeared without priests' cloaks and some of them suspected for nonconformity, but they carried themselves so warily that nothing could be gathered against them." Robert Peck is believed to have been among this number.

Such a condition of affairs was intolerable to Archbishop Laud, who now transferred Bishop Wren from Hereford to Norwich. This prelate's policy has survived in a single phrase, "Uniformity in doctrine and Uniformity in discipline." He began at once to enforce these uniformities and in the little more than two years of his administration "he caused no less than fifty godly ministers to be excommunicated, suspended, or deprived."

* The writer has not been able to verify the statement, but regards it as probable.

Robert Peck married Anne Lawrence, whose father was "a reverend grave minister, a preacher to those who, fleeing for religion in Q. Marie's days, met together in woods and secret places as they could. He was a gentleman of great estate, and exceeding in liberality to the poor."

These fifty men would not read the Book of Sports in the churches as they were bidden. The book exhorted the people to play games on Sunday in Continental fashion, and was abhorrent alike to the Sabbath-keeping people and clergy. They persisted in using "conceived" prayers in addition to the liturgy; that is, they offered prayers of their own composing, an offence strictly forbidden. They further stood at the desks instead of facing the communion table when they read. Their other misdemeanors were of a similar nature. Among those excommunicated was Robert Peck, now a man over fifty years of age.

When Bishop Wren, largely for his doings in Norfolk, was impeached before the Parliament two years later special mention is made of Robert Peck. The Bishop says in his defence: "It appears in the records of this House that Robert Peck had been complained of for misdemeanors, and that in 1616 and 1622 he was convicted for nonconformity." These statements show that through these years Robert Peck had been fighting for the rights of the people and had been brought to the attention of Parliament three times.

The Hingham story has many turnings. We must now look back to the earlier years of Peck's ministry. It may be noted in passing that in 1619 he baptized Samuel Lincoln, the fourth great-grandfather of Abraham Lincoln. Fourteen years earlier, in 1605, he baptized a little baby who was destined to play a notable part in the lives of many Hingham people. This boy was Peter Hobart, a founder and the first minister of New Hingham. Robert Peck baptized him doubly, first into the fellowship of the faith and then into the Christian ministry.

Much might be said of the Hobart family with which Peter

was connected. The member who held the Speaker of the House in his chair in the incident already cited was a Hobart. Sir Henry Hobart was Attorney General to James the First, and afterwards Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. The family was prominent in the region. Their altar tomb with its paneled sides, built in 1507, may still be seen in the nave of Norwich Cathedral. The fact that it survived the later sacking of the Cathedral is probably a proof of the standing of the family. Peter's kinship with these distinguished men has not been traced. Some kinship is probable, if not certain, and in temper he was truly related to them.

Peter was sent first to a grammar school, then to a Free School in Lynn, and thence to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1625, from the same college where Robert Peck had graduated twenty-two years earlier. Next he became a "teacher," delivering lectures and preaching. But because of his independence he had difficulty in securing a parish. Cotton Mather tells us that "his stay in England was attended with much unsettlement." Mather also adds this one mention of his wife: "Yet by the blessing of God on his diligence and by the frugality of his virtuous consort, he lived comfortably." In 1635, together with the others from Old Hingham and its vicinity, he migrated to New England, where he joined his father and a few other settlers who had established themselves about two years earlier on the shore of Bare Cove, now Hingham harbor.

While Hobart had been growing to manhood, the troubles between King and Parliament had deepened. Taxes had been levied without the Parliament's consent and collected by force. Archbishop Laud as we have seen had taken in hand the govern-

ment of the churches. And events had been happening at Norwich that were no doubt much discussed in Old Hingham. The Dutch and Flemish people, we remember, had long been established in Norwich and its neighborhood. For many years their independent churches had existed under a special grant of Edward the Third. Despite the royal grant, however, the Archbishop proceeded to close these churches. Rather than submit the Dutch and Flemish people migrated back across the sea to the low countries. Many hundred people, it is said, left Norfolkshire. Perhaps as many as four thousand left the vicinity of Norwich. The exodus resulted in great detriment to the city and to the region, for these men were expert weavers.

In short, a great harrying process was in progress. King James had said that he would harry the independents out of England. By continuing the process Charles hoped to make England an absolute monarchy, and by this same process the Archbishop hoped to establish absolute ecclesiastical authority. He was trying to build that dreaded "*Imperium in imperio*," the kingdom within the kingdom, which was so feared by our fathers.

The Archbishop was seeking to make the Church the supreme agency in the government. It is well for us to understand what this meant to individual liberty. He revived the ecclesiastical courts. He forbade the right of assembly. Men could not meet for an evening's talk without fear of examination and penalty. For such an offence we learn that Robert Peck and his people were disciplined in Hingham. Peck had been repeating the catechism with a group of his parishioners, and with them had sung a psalm. We learn also that "he had infected his parish with strange opinions." A man might be fined, exiled,

perhaps banished or killed for like offences. It was for sound reasons that our fathers dreaded the "*imperium in imperio.*"

The reasons for all the migration to the low countries and to New England are rooted in this determination of the Archbishop and King to complete the work begun by King James, to harry all the Puritans out of England. However academic and shadowy this word "Puritan" may now have become, the King and Archbishop used it with broad inclusiveness. They meant literally to harry out of England all persons opposed to ecclesiastical courts and like institutions of tyranny civil or ecclesiastical, in short all who contended for a free and constitutional government. Under the name of Puritan they doubtless would have included every reader of this article, no matter what his shade of religious opinion or affiliation. It was while these difficulties were at their height that the first exodus took place from Old to New Hingham.

The immediate causes are at present unknown to us. For gathering in the rectory and singing a psalm together, as has been said, Bishop Wren had the culprits before him in the Church, and made them answer to each charge, "I do humbly confess my sin." The incident may well have played a part in their determination to migrate. Peck was a marked man, as was shown by the reports to Parliament, and by his "infection of the town with strange opinions." Hingham was under suspicion of liberality and independence. These considerations cannot fail to have had weight.

Probably the whole atmosphere of the time and place led naturally to the migration. Many people were leaving England. Cromwell, it is said, just missed coming to America. The Hingham people had seen the weavers driven out of Norwich and a

rich industry laid in ruin. They had seen similar removals all around them. They well knew the meaning of the contest, and their cause at this time was deep in shadow. Beside migration there was no other relief for independent men from the tyranny of Church and State. In 1635 the second company came out, and among them Peter Hobart.

These settlers of 1635, as the others probably had done before them, came from Charlestown by boat, and landing on the shore of what is now the mill pond, Peter Hobart offered prayer for the blessing of God upon the new settlement. This may be fairly called the beginning of the Plantation. Events quickly followed. Land was apportioned in the summer of 1635, and in October of the same year the name of Hingham was recognized by the General Court. Peter Hobart "gathered" the parish, and erected the first meeting-house, a log building surrounded with a palisade.

After the exodus conditions in Norfolkshire grew steadily worse. The Archbishop by this time had silenced the week-day lectures, confiscating their endowments; in many places he had abolished preaching; and he had revived ecclesiastical forms long disused and obnoxious to the people. On entering and leaving the churches the people were bidden to courtesy to the east, a practice unknown since the Reformation. Since the Reformation also the communion tables for the most part had stood in the broad aisles. The Archbishop now ordered them to be restored to the east end of the churches, and to be raised three feet above the chancel floors. To us this order seems harmless.

But to understand the bitter controversy which it provoked we must remember that our forefathers saw in this far more than

THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PEWTER BAPTISMAL BASIN, OWNED BY THE FIRST PARISH, BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT FROM ENGLAND BY THE FIRST SETTLERS. IT HAS BEEN IN CONTINUOUS USE FOR NEARLY THREE CENTURIES.
DIAMETER 13 INCHES; DEPTH 3 INCHES.

a question of decorous public worship. When Governor Endicott, for example, cut out the cross from the English flag the act had many meanings. It surely was more than a question of bunting and decoration. So the location of the communion tables contained meanings other than at first appear. The question then involved large political issues. For sound reasons it appeared to the fathers to be a matter of political liberty. The whole issue in short was grave and serious. There were open quarrels in the churches, protests from the Bishops, parliamentary commissions, petitions to Parliament, and a great ado.

It is now to be remembered that Robert Peck was a marked man, three times reported to Parliament, convicted of nonconformity. But to this order about the communion tables he could not submit. He not only refused to obey. He went further. He dug the floor of his chancel a foot below the floor of the church, and there placed his communion table, endeavoring to make it symbolic of humility. This was a daring and a last defiance flung in the face of an opposing power capable of crushing him. Having done this thing, for which if caught he would certainly have been imprisoned, he fled over the sea, joining his former parishioners and fellow townsmen in New Hingham, where Peter Hobart, who had grown up under him, and whom he had baptized doubly thirty-three years before, was now the minister. So, as Cotton Mather tells us, "This light having been by the persecuting prelates put under a bushel was, by the good providence of Heaven, fetched away into New England, where the good people of our Hingham did rejoice in the light for a season."

Robert Peck did not come alone. Many of the best families of Old Hingham came with him, about thirty in number. If one

may hazard a comparison between the companies, the earlier comprised more men of Peter Hobart's generation, the last more men of Robert Peck's generation, men well established in Old Hingham, in some instances probably the fathers of those who had come out in 1635. Blomfield, no friend to the Puritans, tells us in his history that these men came at great sacrifice, selling their possessions for half their value. Not a few in their coming showed that they still were possessed of affluence. For example, Joseph Peck, brother of Robert, brings his wife and two children, and with them three maids and two menservants, five servants for four people. Even to-day this would be considered luxurious; for that time it was far more exceptional.

The names of these families, about one hundred and thirty in all, have become well known the whole land over. The names are as follows:

Jacob, Lincoln, Hobart, Cushing, Gibbs, Lane, Chubbuck, Austin, Baker, Bates, Betscome, Bozworth, Buckland, Cade, Cooper, Cutler, Farrow, Fop, Gould, Hersey, Hodsdin, Smith, Johnson, Large, Loring, Hewett, Liford, Ludkin, Morse, Nolton, Otis, Phippeny, Palmer, Porter, Rust, Smart, Strong, Tuttil, Walton, Andrews, Arnall, Bacon, Collier, Marsh, Martin, Peck, Osborn, Wakely, Gill, Ibrook, Cockerum, Cockerill, Fearing, Tucker, Beal, Eames. Hammond, Hull, Jones, Lobdin, Langer, Leavitt, Mott, Minard, Parker, Russell, Sprague, Strange, Underwood, Ward, Woodward, Winchester, Walker, Barnes, Cobbit, Clapp, Carlslye, Dimock, Dreuce, Hett, Joshlin, Morrick, Nichols, Paynter, Pitts, Shave, Turner, Tower, Gilman, Foulsham, Chamberlain, Bates, Knights, James, Buck, Payne, Michell, Sutton, Moore, Allen, Hawke, Ripley, Benson, Lawrence, Stephens, Stodder, Wilder, Thaxter, Hilliard, Price, Burr, Whiton, Lazell, Stowell, Garnett, and Canterbury.

Here then were some one hundred and thirty families transplanted from the level country of that eastern promontory, from the broad and fertile Norfolk fields, the comfort of well established homes, the simple and pleasing dignity of Old Hingham,

to the sandy soil, the shallow harbor, the hardship and desolation of the remote wilderness, to the frontier edge of an untrodden continent. This is something worth pondering on. Search the records as we may the plainer becomes the fact that the predominating motive which brought them here was the love of liberty. They were moved by that spirit of democracy which in ever increasing strength has been slowly changing the face of the world, and whose greatest single expression is found to-day in our Republic. They believed, as the fourth great-grandson of Samuel Lincoln described democracy, in government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." And the Hingham Plantation in those early days contributed in no small measure to the formation of that spirit of New England independency which later so largely shaped our national institutions.

The story of the exodus, however, must not merge into the history of the Hingham Plantation, which happily still continues. Perhaps no better ending can be given this narrative than to follow the life of Robert Peck to its close. New Hingham made him the co-laborer with Peter Hobart, curiously enough reordaining him to this office. Many New England parish pulpits were thus "double-barreled." In this capacity he served New Hingham for three years, living on the land now owned by the First Parish just to the south of the Old Meeting House.

Meantime in England the mighty storm of protest and rebellion was gathering. King Charles was forcing the Parliament to arms. The beginnings of the Commonwealth were appearing. The King and Archbishop could not heed the independency of a Norfolk minister, no matter how flagrant. So in 1641 the people of Old Hingham urged Robert Peck to return to them. Peck's successor had reported that the people were "very

factious, resorting to other Churches." The last exodus of 1638 had indeed left the town in a pitiable condition. A curious petition, still preserved in manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, sets forth the pathetic straits to which the community had been reduced, and gives a picture of the times that is worth noting.

It is addressed to "the Right Honorable the Knights, Burgesses and Cittizens of the House of Commons," and is entitled, "The humble peticon of the Inhabitants of the poore ruinated towne of Hingham." It "in most humble wise sheweth" how Robert Peck had for thirty and two years been discharging the office of faithful pastor, "being a learned, godly, loving, peaceful and painful minister, a man so unblameable in his life and doctrine that no just offence in either could ever be found concerning him." It tells how he was excommunicated for not appearing in person before the Chancellor of the Diocese, how when he sought reinstatement he must sign "certain new Articles," how on his refusal the Bishop took away his living, "and put in Curates to the vexation of the parson and parishioners." "About a year and a half after they deprived him under a pretence of non-residency: yet he did always abide where he had so long lived, having had such a care of his charge in religion and civil affairs, that the people were able to maintain their poor and to help other towns, as neighboring Townes can well witnesse."

The petition next touches on the reasons for the exodus. "The minister being driven away, and forced in his old age to flee to seek his peace, and diverse of the inhabitants put to great loss and charges by the Chancellor and other ecclesiastical officers, some for going to a neighboring towne to hear a godly minister preach, and most of them for building a mount in the east end of the Chancel, and of observing ceremonies to which

they were inforced; (it transpires that) Most of the able inhabitants have forsaken their dwellings, and have gone several ways for their peace and quiet, and the towne is now left and like to be in misery by reason of the meanness of the (remaining) inhabitants."

The petition relates recent difficulties and ends with one most illuminating incident that occurred some time after the exodus. A fair was held in the town on St. Matthias Day. A neighboring minister, Mr. Vylett, was asked to preach. "Amongst other godly exhortations he did wish the people to make use of the means of grace for (he said) some lights are gone out of this land." For this reference to Robert Peck and his associates Vylett was immediately deprived of his right to preach, and had to make two journeys up to London before he could be reinstated.

The petition ends with "humbly craving redresse, that Mr. Peck our old minister may be by law and justice of this Court reduced to his old possession."

As the date when this petition was submitted to Parliament is unknown, it probably was about 1640, we cannot tell what direct connection it had with Peck's return. But he is believed to have left New Hingham in 1641. "The invitation of his friends at Hingham in England," Cotton Mather tells us, "persuaded him to return unto them; where, being thought a great person for stature, yet a greater for spirit, he was greatly serviceable for the good of the Church." It could have been no easy thing for him to have returned to "the poor ruinated towne," whence most of his friends had fled. But he went back to take up again his interrupted ministry, and to bear his part in the approaching conflict. There can be no doubt that thorough

research in England would bring to light more concerning both Peck and his associates.

The times had dealt hard with the Bishop of Norwich, successor to the Bishop who had persecuted Robert Peck. The citizens had sacked his palace, had burned his papers and books in front of the cathedral, and stripped alike of his private fortune and emoluments and broken in health the poor bishop took refuge in Old Hingham, where both he and Robert Peck lived for the remainder of their lives.

One last incident of Peck's ministry must be mentioned. In 1654 he was appointed on a Parliamentary Commission to "eject the scandalous, ignorant, and inefficient ministers and schoolmasters of Norfolk and Norwich." Perhaps this was not an uncongenial task!

He died in 1658, and, as he himself directed in his will, was buried "beside my wife and near my church." His will, it is pleasant to note, breathes a suggestion of plenty. He speaks of "My messuage, with all its edifices, yeards, and orchards, also enclosures and barns adjoining." He speaks also of "my lady-close," possibly a part of some convent land. Evidently his last years were spent in comfort, perhaps even in affluence. On his death he had served his parish for fifty-three years, of which three years had been given to this section that had removed itself across the sea.

The happenings at New Hingham in themselves form a story of no small significance. But we are concerned here only with the causes which led to the erection of this Plantation. When these causes ceased to be operative, that is, when the monarchy fell and the Commonwealth under Cromwell came into power, immigration to New England wholly ceased. For the next two

centuries there was little growth in the New England Colonies except that which came by their own natural development. No more convincing proof could be shown that combined as it was with many others the main motive of the immigration was the love of freedom.

We are confronted to-day with rapidly shifting conditions. A newer New England is surplanting the old. Customs and traditions are being established among us which, if not hostile to our democratic spirit, are alien to it. This is because some of our newer and older citizens alike are often ignorant of our history and of the heroic service by which the men of the older time purchased our freedom. Surely we can most profitably remember the history of the New England settlements. And by no means least among them is the story of the erection of this free Plantation of New Hingham. Unless deep disappointment awaits those who hope that the newer New England will become more truly democratic and better than was the older New England, our newer New England must attain to a larger measure of individual liberty than did the old. This can best be brought to pass, not by forgetting the work of the forefathers, but by looking unto the rock whence we were hewn.

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